

[East Bay](#)|[North Bay](#)|[Peninsula](#)|[San Francisco](#)|[South Bay](#)

Navy Finds More Radiation Data Falsification at Hunters Point

In a March 2018 draft report, the Navy details evidence of data manipulation and falsification in 28 buildings that contractor Tetra Tech was hired to clean up.

By [Liz Wagner](#), [Rachel Witte](#) and [Mark Villarreal](#)

Published 2 hours ago

More evidence has surfaced in the alleged data manipulation at Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, the superfund site in San Francisco slated for redevelopment. The company in charge of cleaning up contamination, Tetra Tech, is in the hot seat for the radiation scans it took inside buildings. Investigative reporter Liz Wagner reports. (Published 2 hours ago)

The U.S. Navy has uncovered further data falsification at the Hunters Point Shipyard, this time regarding radiation surveys conducted on 28 buildings at the site, according to a federal report uncovered by the Washington, D.C.-based environmental watchdog group, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, or PEER.

The Navy's March 2018 draft report takes a closer look at building radiation surveys, which were conducted between 2008 and 2016 by Tetra Tech, the federal contractor hired to clean up the San Francisco shipyard. The report states "the surveys have been falsified and cannot be used."

The report details how the Navy re-examined the building data submitted by Tetra Tech during the eight-year period. The Navy found some data had been manipulated, and some scans were not performed correctly.

The report indicates that radiation scan speeds across all survey units were "improper" and, thus, the data recorded were rendered useless. The scans are conducted to confirm that radiological contamination once present on the site no longer exists. However, if a scan is performed too quickly, it cannot accurately determine radiation levels.

In a statement sent to NBC Bay Area by email, Tetra Tech said all of the scans it conducted on buildings at the Hunters Point site were done to Navy standards, and the company stands by its work.

Tetra Tech says, "The draft report from the Navy is just that—draft. It has no author, no peer review, and is not conclusive or authoritative."

The company says if there are still doubts about its work, it has offered to pay for independent testing of soil and buildings.

This isn't the first time Tetra Tech's building scans have come under fire for being conducted too quickly. Internal emails from the California Department of Public Health uncovered by the NBC Bay Area Investigative Unit through a public records request in 2015 show regulators, including the Navy, had concerns that radiological scans on 22 buildings at Hunters Point "were collected too fast."

As a result, the California Department of Public Health suspended the release recommendations for those 22 buildings. A release recommendation indicates any radiation that may have existed on a site has been cleaned up, doesn't pose a health threat and can be turned over for redevelopment.

The department had initially granted the release of the buildings on several areas of the shipyard beginning in 2009. Some of the buildings were historically used to store radioactive materials and contained elevated levels of radium and cesium – elements that have been linked to cancer if people are exposed to them in high levels over time.

Tetra Tech sent NBC Bay Area a 2016 letter from the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), which also includes a memo from the California Department of Public Health. The documents show some of the buildings of concern had been retested and were now recommended to be reinstated for release. In other words, Tetra Tech says the departments certified that the buildings were safe for public use.

In a statement, Derek Robinson, the Navy's environmental coordinator for the cleanup program at Hunters Point, said the Navy stopped all land transfers at the site in 2016 while it worked to determine the extent of the problems with the Tetra Tech data. Robinson said the Navy will work with regulators on "plans for retesting and remediation of work done by Tetra Tech EC, including impacted buildings."

Robinson said the Navy did demolish a "small portion" of buildings on the Hunters Point site, and that the materials from those buildings were removed based on radiological release recommendations. It was unclear from the Navy's statement exactly which buildings were demolished and removed.

"Buildings that have not been demolished are not accessible to the general public," Robinson said. "To date, no areas of radiation have been identified that would be considered an immediate risk to human health."

"We continue to be confident that there is no threat to public safety," Robinson added.

The Navy's March 2018 report states additional data will need to be collected in order for the 28 buildings to be released.

Meanwhile, Tetra Tech has also come under fire in recent years for its falsification of soil sample data at Hunters Point.

In January, the Navy announced nearly half of the company's soil sample data had inconsistencies, and some of it is likely fraudulent.

Two of the company's former employees accused of falsifying cleanup records pleaded guilty last year and were sentenced to prison earlier this month.

At a hearing in front of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors earlier this month, the Navy announced that it is developing a new work plan for how the Hunters Point cleanup will proceed, which the Navy says will be released within a month.

If you have a tip for the Investigative Unit email theunit@nbcbayarea.com. Follow Liz on Twitter and Facebook.

Find this article at:

<https://www.nbcbayarea.com/investigations/Navy-Finds-More-Radiation-Data-Falsification-at-Hunters-Point-483533391.html>

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

© NBC Universal, Inc. | All Rights Reserved.